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From the Office of the Director of Health

New Daily Air Quality Index Forecast Launched

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department partners with local media to provide air quality index predictions to the public daily.

Through the department's Web site, national Web site www.airnow.gov and local media alerts, air quality control staff will notify the public what the air quality index is expected to be the following day, so individuals can take appropriate precautions.

"The air quality index forecast will be based on ground-level ozone and particulate matter data and local weather information from the National Weather Service," says air quality coordinator Doug Neidigh. "Poor air quality can irritate the respiratory system, reduce lung function, and aggravate asthma and chronic lung diseases. People with heart or lung disease, senior adults, active adults and children are at higher risk and should take precautions when the air quality level rises."

Ozone levels are particularly impacted by high temperatures and a stagnant or very light wind. Hot summer days can lead to elevated ozone levels, which generally peak in mid to late afternoon.

Besides following specific recommendations issued daily along with the air quality index, individuals can take general steps every day to reduce air pollutants.

- Choose a cleaner commute by carpooling or riding the bus.
- Conserve electricity at home and at work.
- Plan errands in advance to consolidate trips.
- Mow lawns in the evening during hot summer days.
- Reduce vehicle idling.
- Properly maintain vehicles and lawn care equipment.
- Refuel vehicles in the evenings on hot summer days, and avoid "topping off" the tank.

The air quality index for Springfield will also be updated hourly on www.airnow.gov.

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